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## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

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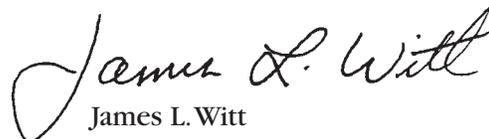
The 1999 fiscal year brought another round of death and destruction due to disasters. A record-breaking hurricane season brought misery to more than a dozen states, and tornadoes and floods brought ruin to communities across the nation. Readiness for the Year 2000 conversion also was part of the agency's focus—requiring many hours of training and preparation.

Despite the workload, the employees of the Federal Emergency Management Agency successfully fulfilled our mission and provided quality service to our customers. The nation's trust in our ability to meet the needs of disaster victims in a fiscally responsible way has been upheld. I am proud to issue this second annual Accountability Report for fiscal year 1999, summarizing our activities and demonstrating how our improved business practices support sound financial management.

FEMA has not only met the needs of its customers and upheld its mission of protecting lives and property for all types of hazards. The agency has also fundamentally revolutionized how emergency management is practiced in this country. No longer is the approach focused largely on aftermath—on responding and recovering after disaster has struck. Now, FEMA is a driving force behind making this country disaster resistant. With the initiative, *Project Impact: Building Disaster Resistant Communities*, FEMA is encouraging a vision of building better and smarter, of working in concert with the environment to prevent disasters, of increasing public awareness about risk reduction and of partnering with the private sector. The success of this initiative will not only save communities from the pain and loss of disaster, but will save federal tax dollars as well.

The pressures on FEMA will continue unabated for the foreseeable future. Increasingly severe weather is predicted and the growth of communities in vulnerable areas further heightens the likelihood that terrible destruction will occur. I have confidence in FEMA's *Project Impact*, in our managers and employees, and our dedication to customer service. We can meet the future and meet our responsibilities to the satisfaction of the American people.

This Accountability Report provides an agency-wide financial statement for fiscal year 1999. Behind the numbers is a success story that impacts everyone in this country. Disasters know no boundaries. Everyone is at risk. With *Project Impact*, a motivated workforce, fiscal responsibility and the trust of this nation, FEMA is charting a course that will have sweeping benefits now and in the future. I am sure you will share my pride in our accomplishments as you read this report.

  
James L. Witt